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THE STATELY HOMES OF ENGLAND.

(OCCASIONALLY OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.)

"The stately homes of England,
How beautiful they stand!
Amidst their tall ancestral trees,
O'er all the pleasant land."—MRS. HEMANS.

BY S. C. HALL, F.S.A., AND LLEWELLYNN JEWITT, F.S.A.

LOWTHER CASTLE.*



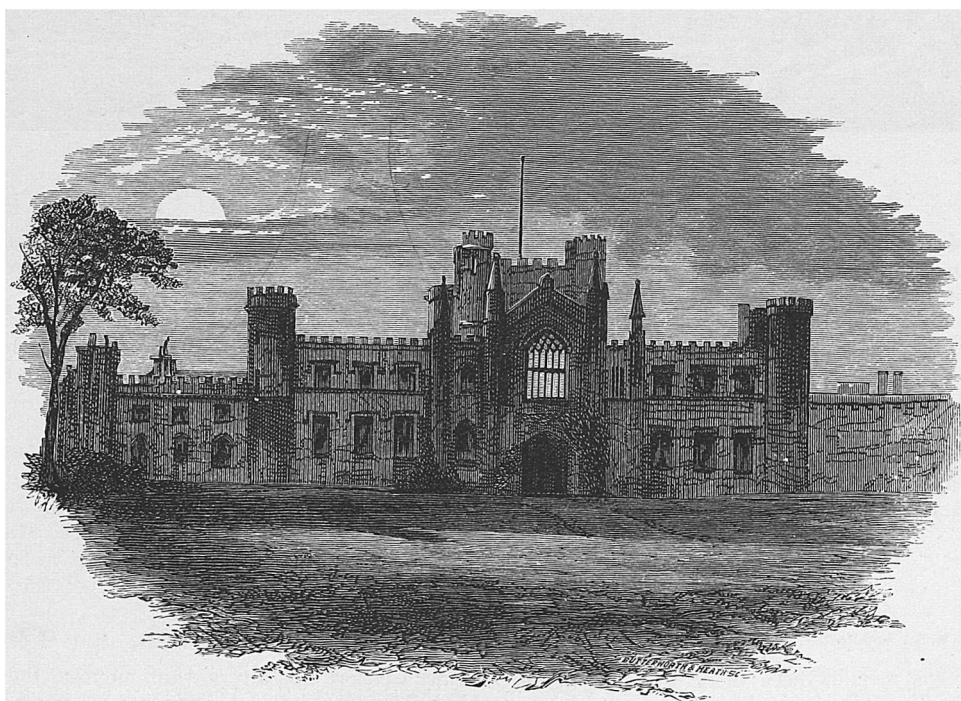
WHETHER from its own nobleness of character, the innate beauty and loveliness of its situation, the magnificence and even sublimity of its surroundings, the grandeur and sumptuous richness of its appointments, the extent of its domains, the historical incidents with which it is connected, the interesting and stirring events which have been associated with its history, or the true nobility of character of its long line of illustrious owners, Lowther Castle may indeed be classed as one of the finest, most important, and most stately of the "Stately Homes" in the favoured land of England. Situate in one of the most lovely shires—Westmoreland—and surrounded on all sides by the most magnificent scenery, Lowther is indeed a "favoured spot"—a locality where nature has been profuse in her gifts, and where Art has found a fitting shrine. Here

"— Hills on hills, on forests forests rise;
Spurn the low earth, and mingle with the skies."

Mountain and dale, hill and valley, fell and lake, moor and meadow, wood and stream, are spread around in such lavish

profusion that the eye wanders on from one to another in constant change of scene, and the mind vainly endeavours to grasp their varied beauties. Its situation is indeed a scene of loveliness not easily conceived, and which but few "earthly Edens" surpass.

The castle itself, as it now stands, is modern; but it was erected on the site of an older mansion, belonging to the same family, which was taken down by Sir John Lowther, in 1685, who enlarged and rebuilt it on a scale of much magnificence. The greater part of this second building, Lowther Hall as it was called, was destroyed by fire in 1720, the wings only being left standing; but these were sufficient "to show the ancient magnitude and grandeur of this formerly noble structure." In 1808 Lord Lonsdale, whose predecessor for very many years had been making preparations by cutting down timber and collecting together materials for the work, commenced the erection of the present noble structure. In January, 1808, the first stone was laid, and by the summer of 1809 a portion of the mansion was inhabited by the family. This new structure, which is of thoroughly castellated character, was dignified by



Lowther Castle.

the name of "Lowther Castle," in place of the old designation of "Hall;" it was erected from the designs of Sir Robert Smirke, at an enormous cost, and is considered to be his *chef d'œuvre* in that style of architecture, in which, however, he was not at all times happy. The north front is thoroughly castellated in its design, the south more ornate and ecclesiastical in its character; the whole, however, from whichever side it is seen, has an air of princely magnificence about it.

* The announcement, last month, of the termination of this series of articles, was premature.

Lowther Castle stands in a grand old well-wooded park of some six or eight hundred acres. In front, at some little distance, runs the lovely river Lowther, with its rocky bed and its wildly-romantic banks; at the back (the south front) are the lawns and the deer park; to the west are the terrace and pleasure gardens and wooded walks; and to the east the stables, kitchen gardens, and village.

The family of Lowther, of which the present Earl of Lonsdale is the noble head, is of considerable antiquity in the border counties of Westmoreland and Cumberland; we are, however,

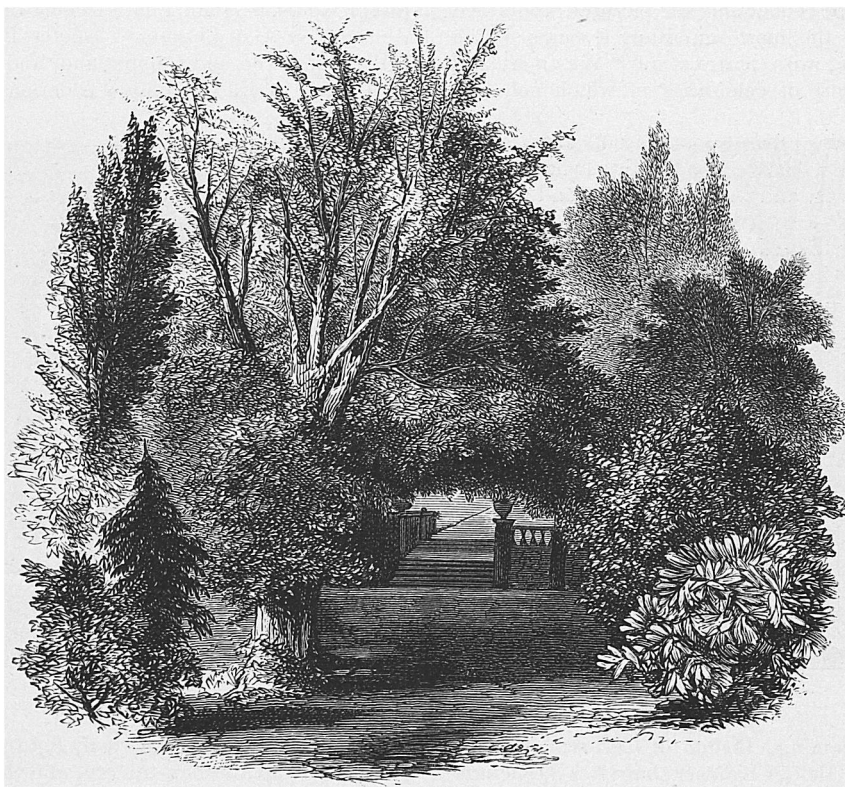
compelled by want of space to postpone a history of the noble family.

Lowther Castle is entered by a massive porch in the centre of its north front; the door, which is garnished with magnificent bronze knockers, giving access to the grand entrance hall. This is a noble Gothic apartment, some sixty feet long by thirty feet in width, ceiled with panelled oak. The entrance doorway is in the centre of the north side, and immediately in front is the grand staircase, across the landing of which is a noble arcade of three lofty pointed archways rising from clustered columns. From the angled corners of the hall doorways open on passages to the domestic offices. At each end of this fine apartment, and again in front of each pillar between and adjoining the flights of stairs, are suits of ancient armour standing on lofty pedestals; ranges of the old "Black Bess" guns of the old Cumberland Militia, and other trophies of arms decorating the walls.

The grand staircase, sixty feet square and ninety feet in height, leads up from the entrance hall to the various suites of apartments. It is entirely of stone, and has a richly-groined ceiling rising from clustered columns. Facing the entrance, on

the first landing, is a magnificent vase, and in canopied niches in the wall are exquisitely-sculptured figures; the arms of Lowther and the alliances of the family, also appropriately decorate the walls. The staircase is of four heights, the upper forming a triforium passage over which are windows filled with rich Gothic tracery and stained glass. The centre of the elaborately-groined ceiling is panelled and bears the inscription: "† Edift. Cul. Com. de Lonsdale an^o. Regni L^o. Rs. Geoi. III. A^o. Di. MDCCCX: cure. Rob^o. Smirke." Arms and banners decorate the walls, and plants and flowers, arranged to line the staircases in every direction, add immeasurably to the beauty and the elegance, as well as to the stateliness of this fine portion of the edifice.

It will not be necessary to enter fully into a description of the various apartments of this noble residence; they are all sumptuous in their furnishing, admirable in their appointments, and replete with everything that can make a "home of taste" enjoyable. Some of the apartments, however, require special notice, and to each of these we proceed to devote a few lines—not taking them in any given order, but as we saw them on our recent visit.



The Yew Avenue.

Passing to the second landing through an "ante-room to the sleeping apartments," in which is preserved a valuable and extensive collection of Ceramics arranged in glass cases, and also a number of antiquities, is the state bedroom and its suite of dressing-rooms, which are all hung with remarkably fine Gobelins tapestry. These noble apartments occupy the space in the centre of the south front, and from the windows are lovely views of the grounds and deer park. The state bed, which is hung with white satin richly embroidered, is of black and gold, the massive cornice, solidly gilt, being surrounded by angels, five on each side and four at the foot, and reminding one of the charming nursery rhyme of our childish days:—

"Around my little bed
Four angels round me spread;
One to sing, and one to pray,
And two to carry my soul away!"

The appointments of the room are of the most sumptuous character, the toilet service of silver gilt adding much to its magnificence.

On the landing of the grand staircase, among other art

treasures are Lawrence's full-length portrait of George IV., Greenhill's Walpole, Kneller's Duke of Marlborough, Addison, and other paintings; and in the east ante-room, leading to the sleeping apartments in that part of the Castle, are various objects of note.

On the first, or ground-floor landing of the grand staircase, to the right, between the private apartments, a corridor conducts to the Gallery of Worthies, and to the left a similar corridor, from which opens the library and other apartments, gives access to the Sculpture Gallery; it has a groined ceiling and contains a large and powerful organ, wall-cases of books, and some valuable paintings and busts.

The library is in the north front, and is a noble and well-appointed room, fitted in a style of quiet sumptuousness that is in full accord with the rich collection of rare literary treasures with which the walls are lined. The ceiling is of panelled oak of suitable Gothic character, heightened with gold, and the presses for books are also of oak richly adorned with cinquefoil cusps. Besides its literary treasures the library is hung with a fine collection of family portraits of surpassing interest. These are

(beginning at the north-east corner of the apartment) Sir John Lowther of Lowther, Bart., 1657; Sir John Lowther, *fil.*, 1675; James, Earl of Lonsdale, known as "the eccentric earl;" Sir Christopher Lowther, Bart.; Eleanor, wife of Sir John Lowther; Henry, third Viscount Lonsdale; Richard, second Viscount Lonsdale; Sir John Lowther, Bart.; Hon. Anthony Lowther; Jane, wife of Sir John Lowther; Rev. Sir William Lowther, Bart.; Sir James Lowther, Bart.; Robert Lowther, Esq.; Sir John Lowther, Bart.; and William, Earl of Lonsdale, K.G. Among other objects of interest preserved in this room is a table formed of the wood of one of the piles of old London Bridge, with a small portion of the "Abdication Tree" of Napoleon inserted. It bears this inscription, "Made out of one of the piles supporting the chapel arch of London Bridge. Supposed date, 1176. The gift of John Rennie, architect, 1829." "Le cinq d'avril dix-huit cent quatorze Napoléon Bonaparte signa son abdication sur cette table dans le cabinet de travail du Roi, le 2^{me} après la chambre à coucher; à Fontainebleau." "Wilkinson & Sons, 14, Ludgate Hill, 1868."

The Billiard-room, not on account of any architectural features or of the use to which it is assigned, but from the remarkably interesting character of the collection of pictures contained within its walls, is one of the most important features of the Castle. Its walls are hung with portraits of "Westmoreland Worthies," forming a gallery of celebrities of which not only

the county but the nation may indeed well be proud, and the founding of which is a lasting honour to the house of Lowther. Well, indeed, would it be if the example of forming local Galleries of Worthies, so nobly set by the Earl of Lonsdale, were followed by the Lords-Lieutenant of other counties whose high functions and important positions point them out especially as the right persons to honour native worth, and their mansions as the right and proper and only place in which such a gallery should be enshrined. The collection of "Westmoreland Worthies" at Lowther Castle is a noble beginning in the right direction, and it is to be hoped the spirit and feeling that caused its foundation by one of the noble heads of the house of Lowther may still actuate his successors, and cause what is now a glorious nucleus to become a full and complete collection. The portraits at present contained in this gallery are Queen Catherine Parr, wife of Henry VIII. and first Protestant Queen of England, born at Kendal Castle; Christopher Baynbrigg, Cardinal of St. Praxedes, Legate to the Court of Rome, Archbishop of York, Master of the Rolls, &c.; George Clifford, Earl of Cumberland; Sir Gerard Lowther, Lord Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas, Ireland; The Marquis of Wharton; The Right Hon. Joseph Addison; John, First Viscount Lonsdale; The Hon. Justice Wilson; Sir Alan Chambre; Doctor Burn, LL.D., the historian of Westmoreland and Cumberland, and author of the "Justice of the Peace;" Lord Langdale; Alderman Thompson, Lord Mayor



The Sculpture Room.

of London; Sir George Fleming, Bishop of Carlisle; Gibson, Bishop of London; John Bell, Chancery barrister; Richard Braithwaite, author of the "English Gentleman," &c.; Dean Addison; Doctor Shaw; Waugh, Bishop of Carlisle; Duke of Wharton; Admiral Sir Charles Richardson; John Langhorne, D.D.; Watson, Bishop of Llandaff; Bernard Gilpin; General Bowser; Thomas Barlow; William Hogarth, whose ancestors belonged to the county; The Marquis of Wharton; Dr. Fothergill; The Countess of Pembroke, who once wrote, when pressed to put in a court candidate for the borough of Appleby: "Sir, I have been bullied by an usurper, I have been neglected by a court, but I will not be dictated to by a subject. Your man shan't stand;" Admiral Pearson, famous for his engagement with Paul Jones; John Robinson, Surveyor-General of Woods and Forests, who is represented holding in his hand a "Report of Acorns planted in and about Windsor Great Park," &c.

Many, indeed most, of these admirable portraits are the work of the greatest Art genius the district has produced, Jacob Thompson, of whom a notice has already appeared in the *Art Journal* (old series), and whose fame as one of the most gifted painters of the English school will live long and endure.

It may be named *en passant* that in various parts of the Castle are a number of paintings—supposed to be veritable Hogarths—which were brought from the old Vauxhall Gardens.

The Drawing-room, opposite the Library, is a lovely apart-

ment—the walls hung with costly figured satin, the ceiling richly groined in elaborate fan-tracery, and the furniture as sumptuous and elegant as the most exquisite and fastidious taste could desire, or the most lavish expenditure procure. Among the furniture is a magnificent suite of couch, chairs, and stools which are of historical interest; they belonged to Tippoo Sahib, and are marvels of Indian Art workmanship in ivory and gold. It is not, however, our province to speak in detail of any of the appointments or furnishing of the rooms; all we can say is that the drawing-room and other apartments are rich storehouses of exquisite gems of loveliness, such as one might naturally expect would characterise a home presided over by a lady of such pure taste and such high accomplishments as the present Countess of Lonsdale. We must, however, casually allude to one literary treasure which is kept in the drawing-room—an album in which have been written by their own hands, at various times when visiting Lowther, poetical or prose contributions by Sir Walter Scott, William Wordsworth, Robert Southey (13th October, 1824), Samuel Rogers (January 23, 1826), the Duke of Wellington (January 2, 1829), Sir Humphrey Davy (Sept. 11, 1826), Hon. G. O'Callaghan, Amelia Opie, and others; while it is also graced by original drawings made on its pages by Dewint, Page, Sir George Beaumont, Lady Anne Beckett, Lady Delamere, Lady Farnborough, Lady F. Bentinck, the Marchioness of Stafford, &c.

The Saloon, in the centre of the south front, has a Gothic

panelled ceiling, and contains many fine paintings by Zuccarelli, Guido, Elisabetta Sirani, &c., and (as well as other parts of the house) some grand old china. The dining-room has two fine paintings, Pitt, by Hoppner, and Wellington, by Jackson, and in the centre of the gorgeous display of gold plate on the buffet is a full-size silver-gilt copy of Flaxman's *chef-d'œuvre*, the Shield of Achilles. The Countess's Breakfast-room contains some of the richest treasures of Art in the castle. Among them are the Wakes, the Feast, and the Fête Champêtre of Teniers; a Holy Family by Rubens; and marvellously fine examples of Vanduyck, Eyt, Wouvermans, Leonardo da Vinci, Gerard Dow, Frank Hals, Ruysdael, Borgognone, Rembrandt, Jan Steen, Sassoferrato, Titian and others.

The Picture-Gallery, with its glass ceiling, is a noble room, filled with paintings of high merit, many being *chef-d'œuvres* of the various artists. It will be sufficient to say that it contains, among others, no fewer than ten Snyders of large size and of almost unmatched excellence (the only others we know of equal or more excellence being those at Welbeck), and admirable examples of Tintoretto, Titian (a remarkably fine picture), Guido, Paolo Veronese, Paris Bordone, Luca Giordano, Backhuysen, Zuccarelli, Hogarth, Bernardo Canaletto, Poussin, Carlo Cignani, Salvator Rosa, Lely (a nude Nell Gwyn, which contrasts very unfavourably with the Titian on the same walls), Paul Bril, Bronzino, Bassano, Fyt, Murillo, Luca Giordano, Zuccherro, and several others.

The other apartments, beautiful as they all undoubtedly are, and filled with choice works of Art, are not necessary to be named. There are, however, two of the most important features of Lowther yet to be noticed. These are the two Sculpture-Galleries and the passages and corridors leading to them. To these we proceed to direct brief attention.

In one part of the gallery is a marvellously extensive and highly important assemblage of Roman inscribed stones, altars, monumental stones, inscriptions of cohorts, &c., from the Roman Wall and from the old stations in the three counties; Mediæval sculptures from the neighbourhood; and a number of Celtic and Roman urns and other antiquities of more than passing interest.

Among the antique sculpture contained in the galleries are the Venus from the temple of that goddess at Cnidus. The exquisite torso, the rest of the figure being restored, was from the Stowe Collection; it is undoubtedly an example of the purest Greek, of an age "when Art was a religion." It is believed to be the work alluded to by Lucian and Pliny as one of the triumphs of Greek Art; a belief which obtains force with all Art-lovers by whom it has been seen. A statue of Diana, of exceeding beauty; a statue

of Julius Cæsar, half life-size, seated in a consular chair, and of fine conception; the upper half of a seated female figure, draped, brought to England by Lord Guilford, and the only specimen brought home by him, a great work, certainly a production of the best era of Greece, and a majestic yet tender creation; a statue of Agrippina, of rare excellence, from the Stowe Collection; a torso of a Venus, from the Marquis of Hertford's Collection, a work of refined delicacy, yet exhibiting intense power; a statue of Bacchus, a relic of great worth; a beautiful statue of Hygeia, from the Besborough Collection, a work of pure Art, originally from the Capitol, &c., &c.

There are also some fine stone chairs, an Egyptian bath, statues of Pan, Augustus, a Roman Senator, Hygeia, Euterpe, Flora, Cybele, Adonis, Paris, the Water-Carrier, Sphinx, Cicero, Aristides, &c., &c.; and "the Olympian Meta, brought from Greece by the Emperor Nero and placed in the Circus at Rome." This unique and very curious relic of ancient Greek Art was purchased by the Marquis of Hertford, and was formerly in his collection. It now forms one of the interesting features of the Lowther Gallery.

The grounds and gardens of Lowther Castle are among its most glorious and charming attractions. Nature has done much for it in the beauty of its situation and the majestic character of its surroundings; and the purest taste in Art, allied to the most consummate skill, has taken advantage of those natural beauties and added charm upon charm to the place. On the west front are lawns (divided from the deer-park by a sunk fence) laid out tastefully in beds rich in their profusion of colours. At the west end of the mansion is the conservatory, and near, but below it, approached by a flight of steps from the terrace, is the "Countess's Garden." The site of this exquisitely-lovely spot is a natural dell, and its sloping sides are turfed and planted, while the centre is somewhat elaborately, and with faultless taste, laid out in geometrical form and filled with the choicest and richest flowers. Near this is the "Yew Avenue"—a walk densely covered in by the intertwined branches and foliage of the rows of yew-trees, hundreds of years old, which range along its sides. This we engrave. From here pathways lead on to the "Terrace" outside the wood.

Of the "Terrace" it is impossible to convey an idea. It is simply a tract of high land, thickly wooded with the finest forest-trees and the most majestic conifers, around the outer edge of which runs a broad grassy walk, or drive, commanding almost a panorama of the finest views that even this district of marvellous scenery can produce. In the wood that skirts the terrace are some gigantic conifers and other trees which are "great among the greatest."

BETWEEN SCHOOL-HOURS.

C. E. PERUGINI, Painter.

W. GREATBACH, Engraver.



THE painter of this picture is, as his name implies, an Italian, but he has long been naturalised in England, and during many years past has very constantly exhibited at the Royal Academy; one of his earliest pictures hung there was a large canvas, bearing the title of 'Chi va piano va sano:' this was in 1866. Among later works was 'Playing at Work' (1872), a garden-scene, in which some ladies are introduced assuming to be very busy as a kind of amateur gardeners. 'A Cup of Tea' (1874) had special commendation for the careful drawing of the young lady who is drinking the tea, and for the general richness of effect pervading the entire composition. 'A Labour of Love,' another young lady "daintily arranging roses," was exhibited at the same time. 'Gardening,' a delicately-painted little picture, was in the Academy last year; and another work of like interest, 'Choosing a Nosegay,' was among his exhibited pictures of the present year. These are but a few out of the many paintings by Mr. Perugini which have been before the public.

It is unquestionable that he made a bold venture in essaying a

composition of the character of that we have engraved; a number of children on stilts is a subject which seems to border on caricature, or absurdity, and would, undoubtedly, have done so in less judicious hands: but, as we see it, it is simply amusing, attractive from its originality—a quality somewhat in its favour in these days of pictorial platitudes—and also from the very agreeable and clever treatment. Certainly the youngsters have a singular appearance as they move on their "elevations" in the order of march, and as it seems of age also; but the arrangement of the figures is so good, and so varied is the attitude of each, that one loses the formality inseparable, it would be thought, from the subject. The artist shows his skill as a designer by the introduction of a large dog on one side of the group, and of a "flyaway" hat on the other; the effect of these is to modify, to a very great extent, the stiffness of the mounted children.

The boys and girls thus amusing themselves "between school-hours" are not actually portraits, we believe, but the scene, as it is presented, is a reminiscence of what Mr. Perugini once witnessed at the house of a friend in the country. The picture was exhibited at the Academy in 1873.